



High Fire Hazard “Red Flag Warning”

The National Weather Service issues a “Red Flag Warning” on days when weather conditions (e.g., extreme heat, low humidity, and high winds) create extreme fire danger. If a Red Flag Warning is issued, residents of LAH may be contacted through an automated telephone dialing system to warn them to take precautions to avoid starting a fire. No outdoor burning, mowing, disking, or use of weed eaters is permitted on Red Flag Days.

Further Information

Los Altos Hills County Fire District
(www.lahcfd.org)

*California Department of Forestry and
Fire Protection*
([www.fire.ca.gov/communications/
communications_firesafety_100feet.php](http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_100feet.php))

*Living with Fire in Santa Clara County,
Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council, 2007*
(www.sccfiresafe.org)

*Fire-Resistant/Water-Wise Landscaping,
Western Municipal Water District, Riverside, CA*
(www.wmwd.com)

Information provided by the Los Altos Hills
Environmental Design and Protection Committee and members of
Open Space and Environmental Initiatives Committees

Town of Los Altos Hills

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www.losaltoshills.ca.gov

Town of Los Altos Hills



Guide to Landscaping for Fire Safety

Landscaping for Fire Safety



Because of the dry Mediterranean climate, steep terrain, and large amounts of combustible vegetation, fire is a serious threat to the Los Altos Hills area. Town ordinances directly address landscape and other measures that must be taken to reduce the risk of fire. (*Title 4: Public Safety; Chapter 2: Fire Prevention*). State and local fire districts also make recommendations for landscaping that may help reduce the risk of losing your home to a wildfire.

One of the most important measures is to create a “defensible space” around structures to reduce the amount of potential fuel in the event of a wildfire. A properly designed and maintained landscape is key to this defensible space. Measures to create a defensible space around your home include:

- Remove all flammable vegetation for a minimum of 30 to 100 feet around structures, depending on the slope
- Remove needles and leaves from roof and gutters
- Clear vegetation and flammable materials from under decks
- Stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from buildings, fences, or other structures

- Keep tree limbs trimmed at least 10 feet from chimneys
- Remove lower limbs to 6 feet above the ground from trees 18 feet or taller that are within the defensible space
- Create firebreaks with patios, masonry or rock planters, boulders, rock mulches, or dry (artificial) streambeds
- Use fire-retardant plants
- Do not plant cypress or junipers close to structures because they contain combustible oils that can cause fire to spread rapidly.

A number of other fire safety measures can reduce your home's vulnerability to wildfire. These include siting the house away from steep slopes and ridge tops, using fire resistant building materials, maintaining the roof and chimney in good condition, and keeping an emergency water supply on site.

Information in the booklet, *Living with Fire in Santa Clara County: A Guide for Homeowners* should be reviewed. (www.sccfiresafe.org)

Weed Abatement

To reduce the risk of wildfires, the Los Altos Hills County Fire District requires that vegetation in meadows and hillsides be cut down by April 1 each year. Homeowners are also responsible for cutting down the roadside vegetation on their properties.

Mowing, string (e.g., weed-eater) or blade trimming, or grazing are preferred to plowing or disking, which causes soil erosion and destroy roots and bulbs of potentially desirable native plants. Applying a layer of mulch can be effective for small areas such as roadsides. Timing of turning the soil is important. If seed has already formed and dropped, rototilling will only replant seed for next year's weeds. Because sparks from mowers, weed-eaters, or disking equipment can easily start fires, this equipment should not be used on dry, windy days.

Trimming Around Utility Lines

Local utility companies are responsible for maintaining vegetation around overhead electrical, telephone, and cable transmission lines. Property owners are notified by mail or in-person by the tree service scheduled to do the trimming.

Free Chipping Service

The Los Altos Hills County Fire District encourages residents to reduce combustible brush and tree prunings on their property by offering a free, on-site chipping service. Residents are notified by mail about this service, which usually takes place in each area of Town twice each year. Information is also available at Town Hall or from the Fire District at (650) 949-1044.

